# Annual Report

## Northern Alberta Development Council

1989 - 90

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# Annual Report

## Northern Alberta Development Council

## 1989 - 90

# Letters of Transmittal

Alberta
TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Office of the Minister

208 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-2080

To Her Honour
Helen Hunley
Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Alberta

Madam:

The undersigned has the honour to transmit herewith, the twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Al. "Boomer" Adair
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Alberta Development Council

Alberta
NORTHERN ALBERTA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Alberta Development Council

Sir:

The undersigned has the honour to transmit herewith, the twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Elliott, MLA
Grande Prairie
Chairman

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# Statement of the Chairman

Bob Elliott, MLA
Chairman
Northern Alberta Development Council

As the Northern Alberta Development Council travelled around its area and met with northerners during the fiscal year, 1989/90, it became clear to members that the north is in the midst of unprecedented change, stimulated by resource development and the resulting economic growth.

To assist northern Albertans to be ready for that growth, Council commissioned a study to determine the economic and social trends that are emerging as the year 2000 approaches. The report that evolved from that study is filled with statistics that chart the direction that will be taken regarding many aspects of northern life.

As well, Council assisted northern communities in their search for health care professionals, studied the current status of literacy in the north and publicized the achievements of educators, communities and concerned citizens in bringing early school leavers back into learning institutions. Council also took the time at a working retreat to scrutinize itself to discover whether its objectives and priorities remain valid in a changing north. While this validity was affirmed, several avenues where further Council attention might be directed were also identified.

Planning was begun for a major 1990 conference designed to examine the opportunities and challenges that will face northerners in the new decade. Ongoing Council activities included public meetings, receipt of and action on briefs submitted at those meetings, research into issues facing the north, consultation with northerners, coordination of various programs, and special initiatives in a wide range of areas.

Another busy year concluded with the appointment of two new council members to fill vacancies created by retiring councillors. The 1989/90 Council successfully worked within its mandate to continue to strive on behalf of the citizens of northern Alberta.

# Northern Alberta Development Council

## 1989 - 90

## The Council and its Area

# NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (1989-90)

**BOB ELLIOTT, MLA**
CHAIRMAN
BEAVERLODGE

**HON. AL "BOOMER" ADAIR**
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT
PEACE RIVER

**Fred Gingerich**
Vice-Chairman
Athabasca

**Gilbert Balderston**
Sexsmith

**Pearl Calahasen, MLA**
Grouard

**Earl Dionne**
Fort McMurray

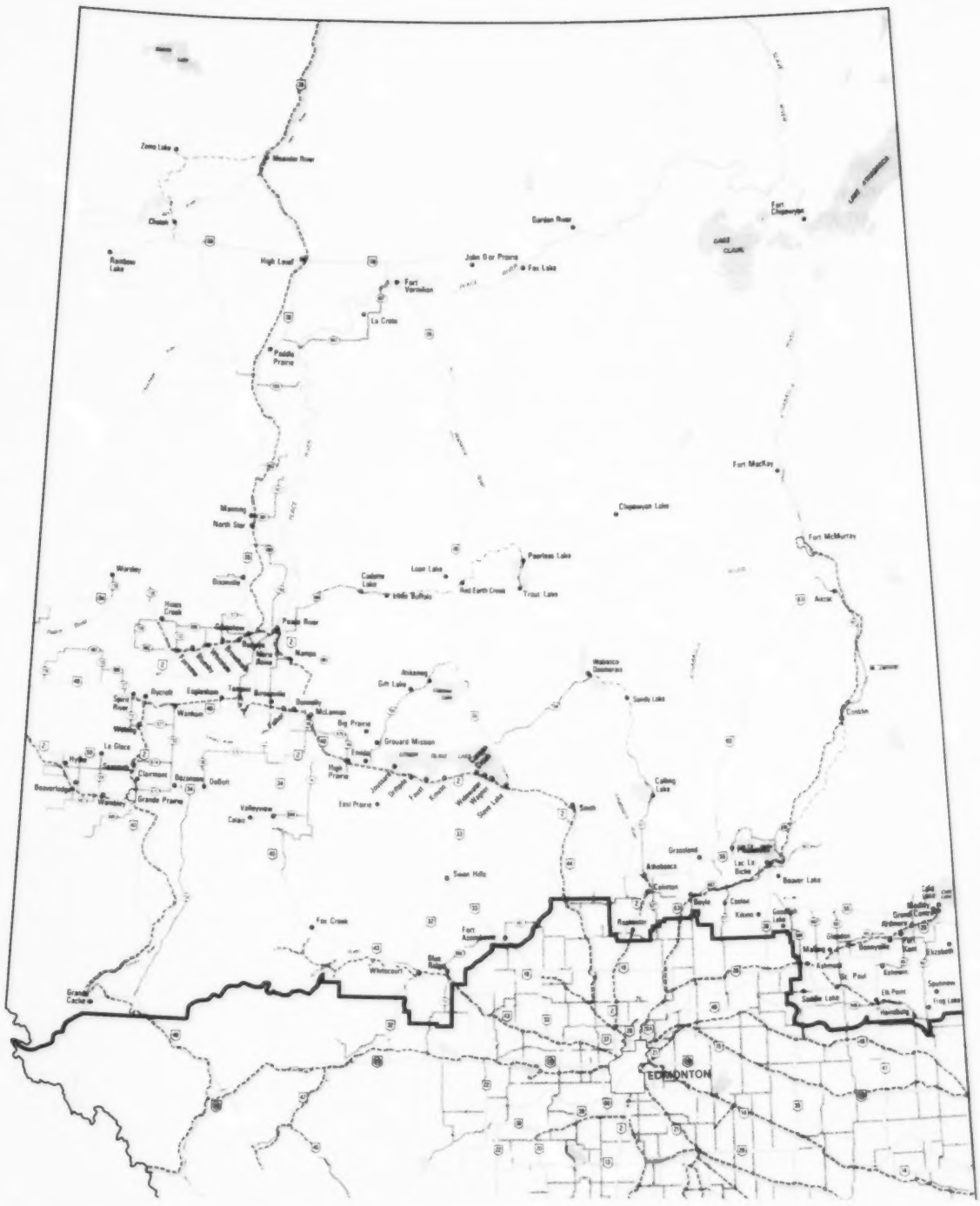
**Marcel Ducharme**
Bonnyville

**Elaine Gauthier**
Plamondon

**Kim Ghostkeeper**
Paddle Prairie

**Harold Junck**
Swan Hills

**Jim Reynolds**
Fairview




## NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA

COMMUNITIES WITH POPULATION OVER 75 (1981 CANADA CENSUS)

km 10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 km

miles 10 0 10 20 30 40 50 miles

PRIMARY HIGHWAY — SECONDARY ROAD - - - - - LOC ROAD ---------- RAILWAY

PRODUCED BY PROVINCIAL MAPPING SECTION, LAND INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION © 1988

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Northern Alberta Development Council was initially created in 1963 as a five-member advisory body to the provincial government. It was enlarged in 1973 to a membership of 10 and currently consists of eight private citizens appointed on the basis of public nominations, and two elected Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Through its own Act, the Northern Alberta Development Council is charged with the responsibility to "investigate, monitor, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the government thereon." The Act makes specific reference to social and economic development, the development of communities and service delivery, and the development of government services and programs.

The Council, at present, has a full-time MLA Chairman and reports to the Executive Council through the Minister responsible for Northern Development.

The Council's primary role is to provide government with a northern point-of-view on a wide range of issues, supplementing and complementing the perspectives of northern MLAs. A major objective of Council since 1973 has been to increase public participation in the planning and design of delivery systems for various government services in northern Alberta.

The general purposes that Council wishes to promote are:

- to enhance economic and educational opportunities within northern Alberta in order to encourage young people to stay;
- to enhance the viability of traditional northern small town and rural life;
- to support the desires and aspirations of all residents in northern Alberta for a fair share in the wealth and potential of the area;
- to support the desires of various cultural and ethnic groups within northern Alberta for maintenance of their distinctive heritage.

Through regularly scheduled public meetings and sponsorship of major conferences and seminars, the Council serves as a forum to which residents can express their ideas and concerns regarding development of the north. In addition to receiving briefs at public meetings, the Council can initiate research into particular opportunities or needs, and often pursues, on behalf of northern residents, efforts toward the development of new programs or coordination of the existing service delivery.

The information service provided through the response to briefs received from the public results in the initiation of most Council activities. Nearly 60 percent of the briefs presented to the Northern Alberta Development Council since 1973 have resulted in positive responses.

Issues considered by the Northern Alberta Development Council during the year under review were many, including agriculture, health services, transportation, infrastructure development, family violence, resource and small business development, education, native education and employment, local government concerns, mental health, recreation tourism, adult literacy, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, housing, water quality, wildlife management, day care, tourism, northern tax credit, professional recruitment.

The Northern Alberta Development Council published a major document in March, 1990, called *Trends in Northern Alberta*. *Trends* consolidates a wide variety of statistical data which gauges social and economic patterns in the north over the past 20 years. The report will serve as a valuable resource tool for northern communities.

The second important NADC publication in 1989/90 was a Council position paper titled *Adult Literacy in Northern Alberta*. This paper coincides with the declaration by the United Nations of 1990 as the International Year of Literacy. The NADC report researched the state of adult literacy in northern Alberta. It provides nine recommendations for the improvement of conditions in support of adult literacy.

The Northern Alberta Development Council serves as a facilitator and catalyst, assisting the line departments of government responsible for the implementation of changes and service improvements. The Council's public participation role over the years has provided an enhanced two-way flow of information, resulting in marked improvements for all northern Albertans.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES REVIEW

The Northern Alberta Development Council met in a retreat session in September, 1989, to review its role and priorities. The two-day meeting in Athabasca with the Minister responsible for Northern Development was an opportunity for planning as well as reflection on communications between Council and the northern public. Priorities established for the next three years as a result of this internal review are:

tourism
environment
multi-sectoral resource planning
stabilizing professional workforce

enhancing educational opportunities
native local economic development
resource tax transfers
housing
communications infrastructure

One of the results of the exercise was a decision by Council to hold a conference in 1990 to discuss northerners' perspectives of the region's economy and environment. The Council hopes to draw together 300 delegates from across the north to discuss how development might proceed in the 1990s considering the north's economic, social and physical environment.

## NEW COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

In late 1989, through public advertisements in all northern newspapers, nominations were solicited from northern community groups and organizations for nominees to replace retiring public members of the Council.

In 1990, the Provincial Cabinet, through the Minister responsible for Northern Development, the Hon. Al "Boomer" Adair, appointed two new members to the Northern Alberta Development Council. The membership of 1990/91 includes:

Bob Elliott, MLA, Grande Prairie, Chairman
Elaine Gauthier, Plamondon, Deputy-Chairman
Gilbert Balderston, Sexsmith
Pearl Calahasen, MLA, Lesser Slave Lake
Earl Dionne, Fort McMurray
Kim Ghostkeeper, Paddle Prairie
Harold Junck, Swan Hills
Larry Langager, St. Paul
Jim Reynolds, Fairview
Daria Wallsten, Slave Lake

# Northern Alberta Development Council Activities

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

During 1989/90, the Northern Alberta Development Council held six public meetings: at Falher in May, Wabasca in June, Grande Cache in August, Rainbow Lake in November, Slave Lake in December and Ashmont in February. Three other regular monthly meetings were held in Peace River as well as a special meeting of Council in Athabasca to discuss future priorities.

One hundred and seventy-six briefs were received from groups and individuals in attendance at the public meetings. Each brief submitted was reviewed by the Council to determine a course of action and forwarded to various departments and agencies of government for consideration and comment. The departmental responses were then discussed by the Council, and a decision made as to whether or not the department's position and proposed action were appropriate. If the departmental response was felt to be inappropriate, the Council directed the Northern Development Branch to further clarify the issue through Branch-directed research, or to undertake discussions with the responsible officials in order to achieve the necessary action. At times, coordination of the efforts of a number of departments of government was required. Brief originators were advised of the progress made on each of the ideas or concerns expressed in their submissions.

The results achieved by the Council varied greatly from brief to brief. In several instances the concerns raised were either totally or partially resolved. In some cases, the Council and Branch are continuing to work toward a practical solution which is acceptable to all involved. The current status of any of the briefs submitted to Council is available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

## BRIEFS

During the year, 42 briefs were received from Fairview, Fort Vermilion, High Level, La Crete, Manning, Peace River, Rainbow Lake, and Worsley in the northwest region; 63 from Desmarais, Faust, Grouard, High Prairie, Kinuso, Nampa, Red Earth Creek, Slave Lake, Smith, Swan Hills, Wabasca, Whitecourt, and Widewater in the north central region; two briefs were received from Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray in the northeast region; 23 from Ashmont, Athabasca, Bonnyville, Elk Point, Fort Kent, Grand Centre, Lac La Biche, and St. Paul in the southeast region; 41 from Beaverlodge, DeBolt, Falher, Fox Creek, Girouxville, Grande Cache, Grande Prairie, McLennan, Sexsmith and Valleyview in the southwest region; and five from Edmonton and other points outside the Northern Alberta Development Council boundary.

## RESEARCH AND COORDINATION

Many of the issues brought to the attention of the Northern Alberta Development Council require intensive background work and follow-up activities. As a result, the Council initiated a number of research projects and efforts directed at coordination or modification of the delivery of government services in various areas.

Major Council activities in 1989/90 included:

- a review and discussion meeting on various policy issues with the Minister responsible for Northern Development
- a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Forestry, Lands & Wildlife regarding forest industry developments in northern Alberta
- support and follow-up for briefs related to transportation and infrastructure development
- participation on the Minister of Agriculture's Beekeeping Advisory Committee
- completion of Northern Adult Literacy Review Workshops and an NADC position paper on adult literacy
- completion of a compendium of statistical data on northern Alberta
- initiation in conjunction with Alberta Health of a review of the delivery of mental health services
- completion of a review of Council's priorities for the future
- initiation of planning for a major conference to be held in 1990
- participation on the Forest Industry Training Interdepartmental Committee
- initiation of a handbook to assist local communities with fundraising efforts
- assistance to a group of farmers to assess the impact of changes in the Crow Benefit payments
- follow-up to briefs received regarding medical recruitment
- support for a multi-municipal study to examine water supply alternatives
- follow-up to a brief from a remote community requesting improved telephone services
- continued sponsorship of the Student Bursary Program

- support for a manpower recruitment component to enhance the Student Bursary Program
- continued support for and participation in the Health Care Connection for the recruitment of health care personnel to northern Alberta
- completion of a health care professional recruitment prospectus
- completion of work on an early school leavers video
- continued coordination activities related to the Peace Arch Project
- ongoing work on the Northern Supplementary Fund Committee
- participation in a steering committee assessing commercial recreational opportunities in northern Alberta
- continued involvement on the Fort McKay Interface Project
- support for a community research project in Peace River
- data gathering for a project to update the publications, *Inventory of Infrastructure* and *Community Profiles*
- support for briefs presented regarding medical professionals
- production of the second volume of *Alberta North* magazine for children.

## TRENDS IN NORTHERN ALBERTA 1970-1990

The Northern Alberta Development Council published its second edition of *Trends in Northern Alberta* in March of 1990. Council first compiled statistical data on northern Alberta in 1980 and, because northerners have indicated many times that the publication has been a valuable resource tool, it became clear that an updated record was required. This updated statistical overview covers some of the key trends that have affected northern Alberta over the past 20 years.

*Trends* is a useful source document for planners and policy developers of federal, provincial, municipal and district governing bodies. Community organizations, boards and businesses also find the document's content invaluable in their planning. *Trends* consolidates a wide range of statistical data which provides some of the background information to help readers more precisely gauge various demographic, economic and social trends in northern Alberta.

## SOME KEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Demographic Findings

- From 1971 to 1988, NADC area population increased over 50%.
- Growth in urban areas outpaced rural areas. City population increased over 200% from 1971 to 1988 while population in towns and villages increased just over 59% and 41% respectively.
- Youth population (up to age 24) increased 18% from 1976 to 1986 in the NADC area while the province saw an increase of 10%.

### Some Economic Findings

- The number of NADC area residents over 15 years of age without a Grade 9 education has decreased 23% between 1971 and 1986.
- The number of NADC area residents obtaining a university degree has increased 290% between 1971 and 1986.
- While the NADC area accounts for approximately 10% of the Alberta population, the proportion of medical specialists, dentists and general practitioners in the NADC area respectively account for 2%, 6% and 9% of the Alberta total.
- Public assistance caseloads doubled in the NADC area since 1975; however, this was still less than the provincial increase.
- Capital investment in completed industrial projects in the NADC area increased from $50 million in 1983 to $1.8 billion in 1988.
- NADC area farmers maintained their share of provincial coarse grain and oilseed production from 1971 to 1986 representing approximately 19% of the provincial total.
- Crude oil production in the NADC area decreased by 30% between 1971 and 1985 while natural gas production increased by over 470% during the same period.
- Timber harvested in the northern region increased over 130% between 1971 and 1988. This accounts for approximately 90% of the provincial harvest.
- Estimated tourist visits in the northern region have remained steady at 19% of the provincial total since 1982.

## ADULT LITERACY IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

In recent years the Northern Alberta Development Council has witnessed an increasing interest in adult literacy. To become more familiar with adult literacy, the NADC requested a study of literacy in northern Alberta.

The study had four objectives:

- to conduct a thorough literature review on literacy issues and trends
- to provide an overview of literacy and the present situation in northern Alberta
- to identify the characteristics of illiterate adults in northern Alberta
- to complete a thorough review of all programs and practices addressing literacy in northern Alberta.

The study on adult literacy in northern Alberta yielded the following principal findings:

- In northern Alberta, 16.6% or 27,715 people have less than Grade 9 education. In 1988, 2,361 people were enrolled in literacy programs.
- Men make up 57% of the low education population and women the remaining 43%. However, the gender gap is reversed for literacy project enrolment: 56% of all learners are women; 44% are men.
- The population with less than Grade 9 education tends to be older: 65% are over 44 years of age. The reverse is true for literacy project enrolment: 91% are under 45 years of age; 47% are under 25.
- A high proportion of the population with less than Grade 9 is likely to be of native background. The trend continues for literacy project enrolment with 44% of all literacy learners being natives.
- Few literacy learners lack school experience entirely: 62% have less than a Grade 9 education, 4% have a high school diploma or beyond, and the rest fall somewhere in-between.
- Five government departments fund literacy projects in northern Alberta. They are Alberta Advanced Education; Alberta Career Development & Employment; Employment and Immigration Canada; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; and the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Subsidiary Agreement. Secretary of State Canada supports literacy related projects.
- Project strengths include a flexible, adaptable structure that is generally learner-centred and community-based. This is especially true for volunteer tutor projects.

Eight key issues affecting northern literacy have been identified:

- literacy awareness
- targeting literacy learners
- learner support
- voluntary tutor project support
- program funding
- prevention
- illiteracy and natives
- innovative approaches.

### The Northern Alberta Development Council's Position Paper

Based on the findings of the background research, two public workshops and extensive consultation, the NADC made the following recommendations in the form of a council position paper:

1. that senior governments fund a coordinated multi-media campaign to increase the awareness of illiteracy during the United Nations Year of Literacy in 1990
2. that northern Alberta school boards and Alberta Education take the responsibility and subsequent action to reduce the incidence of students leaving the school system without sufficient literacy skills
3. that the Alberta government establish a one-window approach to literacy programs and services and that one single department be designated to serve in that role
4. that Alberta Advanced Education increase the level of funding for volunteer tutor projects
5. that Alberta Advanced Education provide funding based on the actual needs of individual volunteer tutor projects as per budget requirements which take into account the activities of each project
6. that the Alberta government provide institutions with sufficient long-term core funding for literacy programming
7. that literacy providers ensure a range of support systems are in place to assist adult learners to deal with and overcome the barriers they face

8. that the relevant departments in the provincial and federal governments jointly convene a task force together with native organizations such as zone and regional councils, band and settlement councils, to examine northern literacy needs.

## EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS VIDEO

The Northern Alberta Development Council, along with the Alberta Vocational College Lesser Slave Lake, prepared a 30-minute video this year on the topic of early school leavers in northern Alberta. The video describes six successful, community-based programs which are now in place across the north. The programs, located in Grande Prairie, Peerless Lake, Trout Lake, Calling Lake, Lac La Biche, and Grand Centre, each depict initiatives that address the prevention of "dropping-out" of school as well as the encouragement which is given to northerners to return and upgrade their education.

In 1984, the NADC completed a major study entitled *Early School Leavers in Northern Alberta*. The report identified the scope of the problem in the north. Afterwards, Council made a concerted effort to assist educational institutions with upgrading programs and to encourage early school leavers to stay in school.

The video, designed to promote the positive measures which have been established over the past five years, is now being used as a companion to school curriculums and at community/school workshops on prevention of early school leaving.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

The NADC commissioned a report to attract medical professionals to northern Alberta. The report was aimed at health care professionals, particularly physicians, nurses and dentists, to improve their awareness of employment and business opportunities available in northern Alberta.

*Opportunities for Health Care Professionals* provides a well-rounded description of the north from the following perspectives:

- an overview of northern Alberta
- economic and social data
- education services
- amenities and social services.

It presents profiles of health care facilities, services and opportunities on a community-to-community basis. Each profile includes:

- hospital services and facilities
- special medical services
- community incentives to medical professionals
- challenges and career opportunities in each community
- community contact persons.

*Opportunities for Health Care Professionals* found that as of September, 1989, there were opportunities for 19 general practice physicians and 32 specialists in the north. The report identified opportunities for six dental practices as well. Northern hospitals and health units reported 166 positions available for nursing staff and about 100 other technical and support professionals.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY HANDBOOK

The NADC commissioned another in its series of community self-help handbooks. The publication deals with public input through the survey process.

Often community organizations find themselves planning for future activities without adequate information about their community. This is a guidebook to show organizations how to obtain that community information.

The general objectives are twofold:

- to show the people involved with information gathering that a community survey need not be an overwhelming task
- to demonstrate that if a plan or "survey process" is followed, needed information will be obtained.

The principal findings of the handbook include the following five steps:

Analyze the situation.
Consult with key agencies and individuals.
Establish a working committee.
Summarize the issue and purpose.
Implement the survey.

**Analyze the Situation:**

- Who wants the survey done and how do they plan to use it?
- Who else could be affected by the results?
- Are other factors contributing to the problem?
- Do neighboring communities face the same issue?
- Which community members care most about the issue now?
- Who may be affected in the future if the problem is left unattended?
- Has a similar study been done recently?

**Consult with Key Agencies and Individuals:**

- Communities are advised to contact those people they know or believe will be affected.

The report advises that community support be broadened from:

- high profile, credible individuals who can visibly and vocally support the concept and study
- the public, who will be answering the questions, will be affected by the results and will expect follow-up
- other agencies who may want to provide assistance and use the results
- local government departments and founding agencies
- the media, who can keep the community informed by sharing information.

**Establish a Working Committee:**

Experience has shown that an appointed smaller "working committee" or "task group" tends to be more efficient in handling projects.

The people selected are critical to success. The following points must be considered:

- What knowledge or skill will these individuals bring to the group?
- Can they work well with others? How compatible is their style?
- Will they have time? Will they meet deadlines?
- Is this mix of people reflective of the characteristics of the survey population?

**Summarize the Issue and Purpose**

Before taking action there may be one more step:

Ensure that each member understands and agrees regarding the problems, issues and goals.

The following questions will help clarify and summarize the issues:

- The issue is?
- The background of the problem is?
- What must be learned from this survey?
- The groups who may want to use the survey results are?
- The groups or individuals who will be affected by the survey results are?
- The purpose of the survey is to?

**Implement the Survey:**

Once the survey goals are in place, it is time to implement the survey process and gather its results.

## STUDENT BURSARY PROGRAM

Created in 1974, the Northern Alberta Development Council Student Bursary Program is designed to facilitate the training of technical or professional manpower in demand in northern areas of the province.

Students assisted through the program are obligated to work in northern Alberta, preferably in rural locations, for at least one year for each year of bursary support received.

The Bursary Program is administered by the Students Finance Board. A selection committee, made up of four members of the Northern Alberta Development Council and one representative each from the Metis Association of Alberta, the Students Finance Board and Alberta Career Development and Employment, is responsible for the establishment of guidelines and selection of candidates for bursary support.

On the basis of the selection criteria, the Selection Committee granted bursary assistance in 1989/90 to 176 applicants for a total of $728,000. The current bursary rates are $3,500 for single students and $6,000 for married students per academic year. Since the inception of the program, 2,159 bursaries have been awarded. These bursaries attracted professional manpower into the health care system, education, social services, agriculture, law, business, and engineering. Most of the bursary graduates have returned to the north, and at least 50% have remained there to contribute to the growing and diverse economy of the region after completing their return service obligation.

Through a joint initiative between Career Development and Employment, and the Northern Development Branch, the Professional Manpower Recruitment Project has assisted bursary graduates in contacting northern employers. The project has made extensive contact with bursary recipients from both the past and the present to evaluate the program and update employment status and other information.

## MEDICAL ELECTIVE PROJECT

In September of 1984, the Northern Alberta Development Council initiated a Medical Elective Project as a follow-up to the Council's very successful Medical Recruitment Interchanges. The interchanges brought northern community representatives together with medical students from the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary.

Small grants provided through the Medical Elective Project help medical students to defray their travel and accommodation costs while taking course electives in northern Alberta. The intent of the project is to encourage

medical doctors to locate in northern Alberta, upon graduation, by giving them a sample of life in the north.

The success of the project led to its inclusion as a special sub-program under the Northern Alberta Development Council Student Bursary Program. In 1988, the project was expanded to include professionals from the University of Alberta Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine under the title of the Medical Professional Exposure Project.

Since the project began, 85 medical students have been funded at a cost of $69,370. Since its inception in the fall of 1988, eight occupational therapists at a cost of $5,725 and 12 physiotherapists at a cost of $8,515 have been funded. Practicums were taken in 16 northern communities.

## NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

The purpose of the Northern Development Branch is to participate in developing and maintaining a socio-economic environment in northern Alberta which gives maximum opportunity for inhabitants of the area to grow and prosper.

In achieving its purpose, the Branch provides all the administrative and technical support activities required by the Northern Alberta Development Council, and attempts to implement a flexible strategy of achieving specific socio-economic improvements in northern Alberta.

The Branch seeks to advance the development of human and natural resources in northern Alberta, as well as to aid in community development goals such as local decision-making and planning. It delves into a wide variety of issues as a result of briefs received by the Northern Alberta Development Council, e.g., agriculture, resource development, business development, tourism, manpower training, community and regional infrastructure, education, social services, recreation, communications and transportation.

The **Research and Coordination Section** of the Branch provides research on community and regional needs in the north, program evaluations and analysis and policy development as requested by the Northern Alberta Development Council. It also monitors and coordinates program delivery and special enrichment projects for the north.

Although not directly involved in Council activities, the **Agreement Administration Section** provides information to the members as required. The purpose of the Section is to implement the Canada/Alberta Northern Development Subsidiary Agreement over the 1986-91 time period. This involves assessing applications and undertaking the necessary financial disbursement and control procedures.

The **Council Administration Section** provides technical and logistical support to the Chairman and to individual Council members for the monthly meetings and special project support for Council and Branch initiatives.

In support of Council's public participation role, section staff visit community leaders prior to public meetings to prepare advance briefing material for Council members. Contact is made with town councils, chambers of commerce and other interested community members to discuss concerns related to the development of business, industry and government services in their region. Staff members are available at any time to answer questions from the public about the brief presentation process. Usually six public meetings of Council are held in different communities across northern Alberta each year.

Section staff are responsible for the preliminary investigation of issues presented at public meetings or directly to the chairman between meetings. In its work as a coordinator and facilitator and, particularly, as a supplier of technical support to the Northern Alberta Development Council, the Branch continues to maintain a vital communications link between northern people and government.